

# BETTER BLOCK PROGRAM UPDATE & PLACEMAKING

Overview for Norfolk City Council

March 4, 2014



# NORFOLK BETTER BLOCK DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

- Arts District Better Block
  - April 12-13, 2013
  - Theme: Artistic Expression and Enterprise
- 35<sup>th</sup> Street “Soul of Norfolk” Better Block
  - October 8-9, 2013
  - Theme: Showcase of the city’s diverse small businesses



# WHY USE BETTER BLOCK?

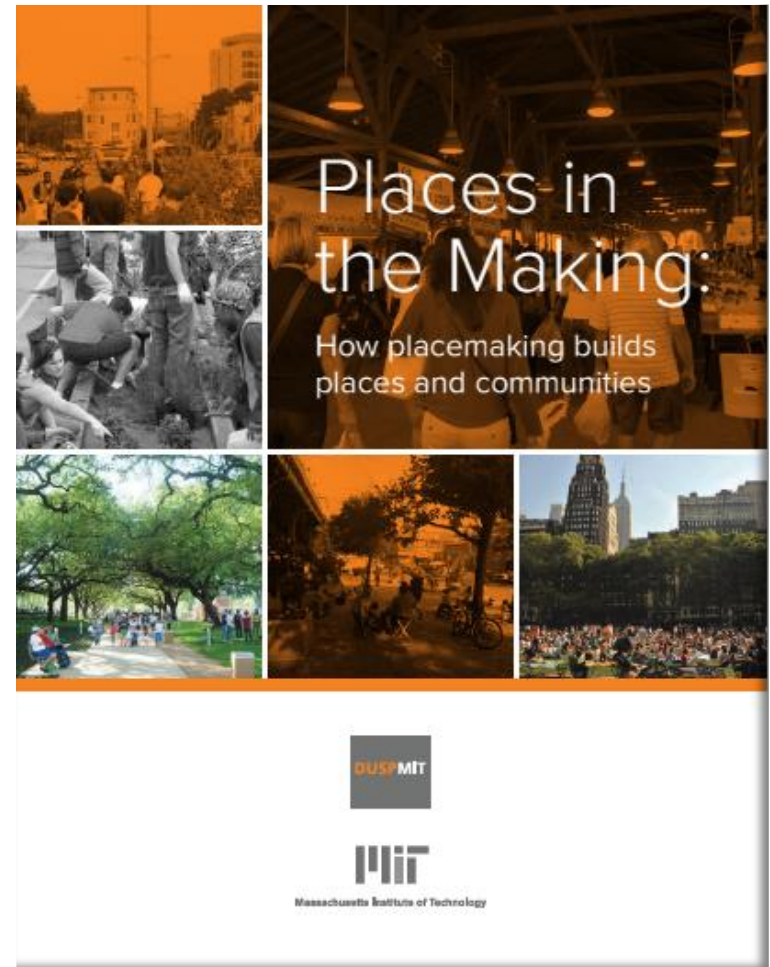
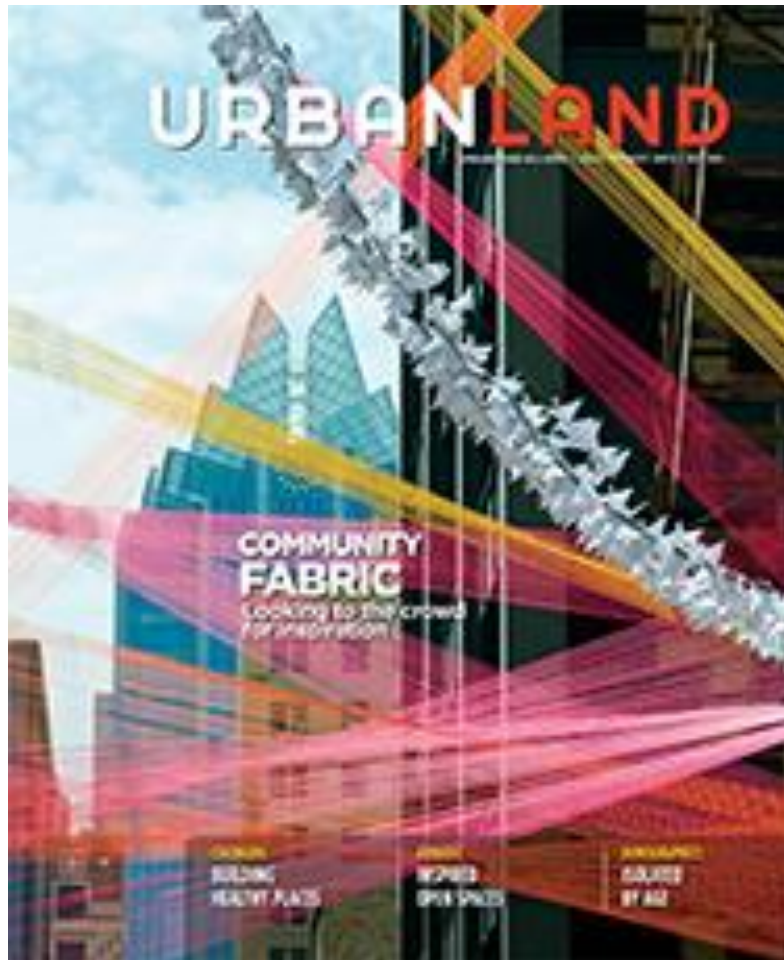


- **Community-Driven Revitalization Project**
  - Pop-Up Retail Opportunities
  - Tests Infrastructure Changes
    - Parklets
    - Additional Crosswalks
- **Informs Planning Decisions**
  - Implementation of Zoning Changes
    - New land uses
    - Change in development standards
  - Streetscape changes
- **Low Cost Investment**
  - Catalyst for change in months rather than years





# RECOGNITION FOR NORFOLK'S USE OF BETTER BLOCK FOR PLANNING & PLACEMAKING

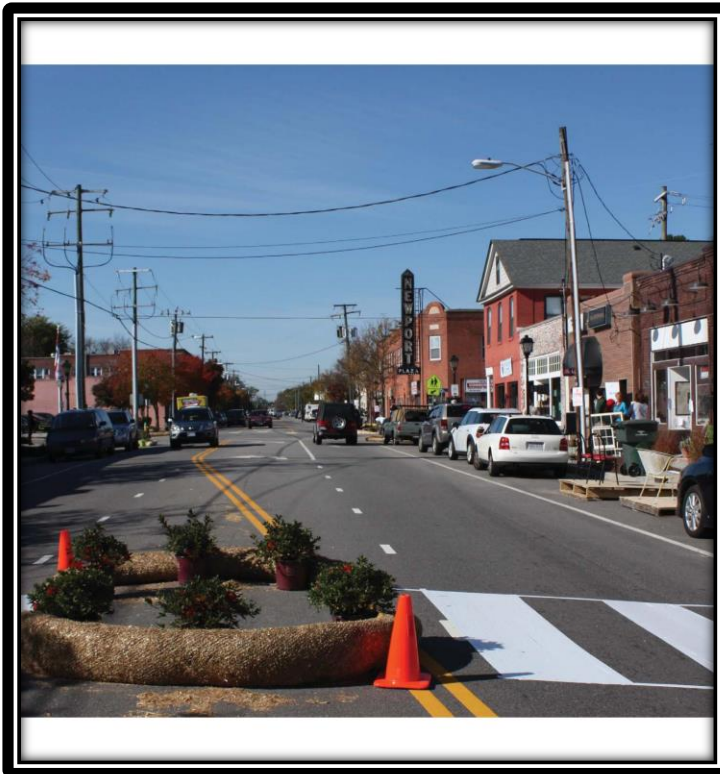


- Implementation of the demonstration project was the result of key stakeholders:
  - Park Place Business Association
  - Park Place Civic League
  - Hampton Roads Realtors Association
  - All property owners and business owners
- 35<sup>th</sup> Street Pedestrian Commercial Overlay District Changes
  - Additional uses for commercial properties to reflect market demand within the area
  - Modify development standards and waivers
  - Modify PCO Development Certificate requirement to streamline the approval process for new development within the zoning district.

## 35<sup>TH</sup> STREET BETTER BLOCK



- Demonstration project as test for changes
  - Traffic calming techniques:
    - Avg Speed prior: 25 MPH
    - Better Block: 12 MPH
  - Enhance opportunities for multi-modal movement
  - Create invitations for people to live/work in the area.



**INFRASTRUCTURE:  
35<sup>TH</sup> STREET**



# UP NEXT: FIVE POINTS FALL 2014





# PLACEMAKING RECOMMENDATIONS



**“IT IS DIFFICULT TO DESIGN A SPACE THAT WILL NOT ATTRACT PEOPLE. WHAT IS REMARKABLE IS HOW OFTEN THAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.” - *WILLIAM H. WHYTE***

**“PLACEMAKING IS AN ACT OF DOING SOMETHING. IT’S NOT PLANNING, IT’S DOING. THAT’S WHAT’S SO POWERFUL ABOUT IT.”  
— *FRED KENT***





# PARKLETS

A public amenity that serves as seating, greenspace, and a pedestrian attraction.

A low cost, flexible installation built over 2-3 parallel parking spaces.



Attractive alternative to sidewalk encroachments in business districts with narrow sidewalks.





3 Way Cafe  
Soup      Roasted Club  
Quiche      Spinach and Cheese  
T.G.I.F.  
Fish Tacos  
Grilled Chicken  
and Mushroom  
Couscous

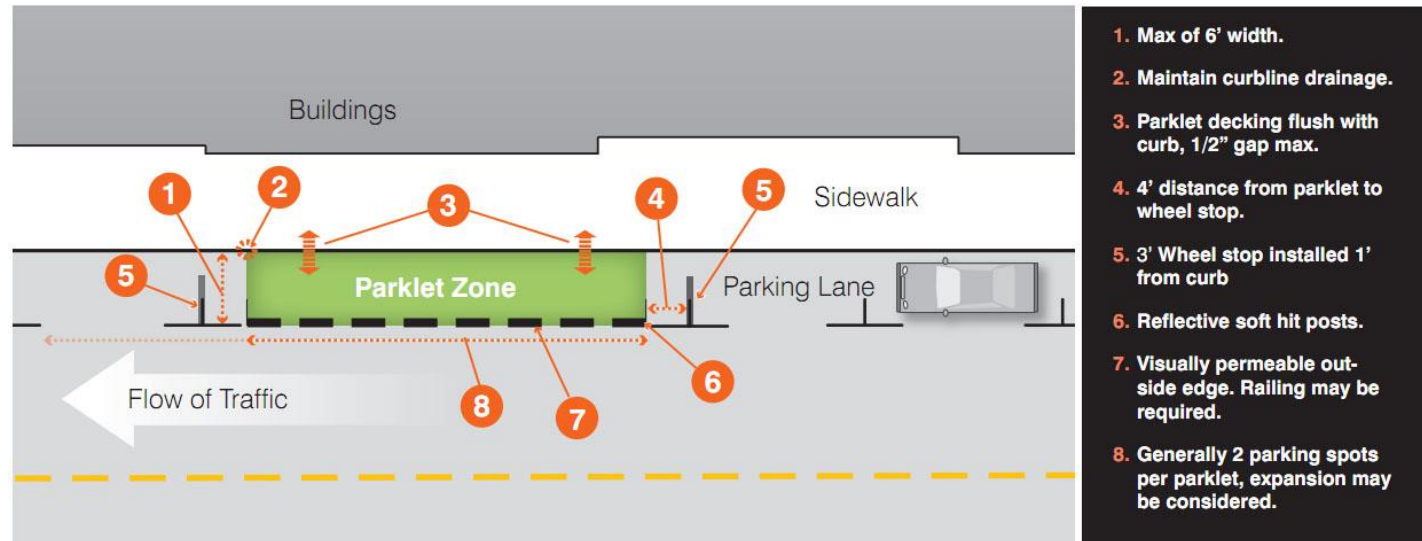




# PARKLET PROPOSAL

- Develop program to allow establishment of parklets in any business district in the City on a seasonal basis (Spring – Fall)

## DESIGN AND PLACEMENT GUIDELINES



# CONTAINERS FOR COMMERCIAL USES

An emerging trend across the globe repurposes shipping containers for other uses.

The use of donated Maersk containers at Norfolk's PLOT is an example public art.

Future relocation of the PLOT and emerging redevelopment in business districts across the city offer opportunity for other uses.



La Boite Coffehouse – Austin, TX











# SEE / CHANGE

STH / ST / SEAPRT / NYC



ALL/  
SUM  
MER

SEECHANGENY.COM  NOW OPEN





America's Cup Village – San Francisco – Summer 2013



# CONTAINER PROPOSAL

- Develop program to allow for use of containers for commercial business activity particularly pop-up retail, coffee shops and park supportive activities.
- Support use of PLOT 2 containers for similar purposes
- Support use on other vacant properties in business districts across the city on a temporary basis during emerging redevelopment

## GRANBY STREET LIGHTING

The City engaged RG Electric and Hilbish McGee Lighting Design to evaluate lighting options for Granby Street

Stakeholder input meetings were held in November and December with property owners and members of the Downtown Norfolk Council

Stakeholder input recommended:

- Lighting to create image that is unique
- Create environment for “photographic” moments
- Visible lighting to attract people to Granby St.
- Stake our claim now







## THE ROLE OF LIGHTING IN PLACEMAKING

Larimer Square, Denver, CO  
and Short North Arts  
District, Columbus, OH  
provide inspiration







# GRANBY STREET ARCH LIGHTS

1909 - 1925



# GRANBY ST. LIGHTING PROPOSAL

- Continue to work with RG Electric / Hilbish McGee Lighting Design, Dominion Power, Downtown Norfolk Council and stakeholders to develop final recommendations for the following:
  - Implementation of new Arches of Light on Granby Street
  - Options for uplighting trees
  - Building accent lighting opportunities
  - Artistic projection lighting opportunities
  - Enhance existing street lighting